



CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT WATCH (CAMGEW)

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REPORT ON THE INFORMATIVE AND SENSITISATION OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS TOWARDS CAMGEW PROJECT IN 2 COMMUNITIES OF BELABO

Introduction

CAMGEW received funds from Global green grants to sensitise community members around the Lom-Pangar Dam in the East region of Cameroon. This was aimed at raising the awareness of community members on their rights as people living around dams.

On this effect CAMGEW team comprised of Ngum Jai Raymond and Ngouffo Noel Tameta went to Belabo Sub Division of the East Region of Cameroon from the 7th to 9th December 2017 to meet the various community leaders and chiefs and plan for the capacity building workshops on the valorization of the impacts of Dams around their communities.

Objectives of the field visit

- To meet authorities and get approval to organize workshop with community members
- To plan for the workshop with community leaders

Methodology and activities

The team travelled from Yaoundé on the 7th of December 2017 and was in the field till the 9th of December 2017. They went to the field each day at 8 AM and closed at 5 PM.

Their activities on the first day consisted of;

- Meeting the Divisional office for the Belabo Sub Division. Together we discussed the reason for our team being in his area of jurisdiction. CAMGEW team discussed the project and the subsequent activities CAMGEW could be involved in within the area like bee farming. He was happy about the idea of making the community members valorize the impact of the dams and creation and valorisation of other livelihood activities around.
- CAMGEW team also met with the Mayor for Belabo represented by the Secretary General for the Municipality- Mr. Anabu. He was happy that NGOs have started thinking of valorizing the impacts of the Lom-Pangar Dam. He was also happy to hear of a possibility of introducing income generating activities like bee farming in the sub area.
- CAMGEW team also visited the Belabo Communal Radio (BCR) to talk about a possible partnership within the project to communicate the impacts of the Dam on the Communities around the Dam that were greatly affected by the Dam.

After visiting the various authorities, CAMGEW team proceeded to identify the villages where sensitizations will be made on the impacts of the dams and on how to valorize the impacts to benefit the community members. The teams identified Mbaki, Goyoum and Deng-Deng to benefit from the capacity building workshop.

CAMGEW team met the village chiefs of these three communities and with them they planned on the date for the meetings. It was also discussed on how many people will be involved in the meetings. On the first day CAMGEW worked in Mbaki and Goyoum and on the second day they were in Deng-Deng.

Outcomes and results of the sensitization meetings

- Through the sensitization meetings with chiefs, CAMGEW team could plan with the village chiefs on the dates for the capacity building workshops. It was arrived at as follows;

SN	Village	Name of chief	Date for training
1	Mbaki	Sa Majeste Tchuo Jean Paul	17-12-2017
2	Goyoum	Sa Majeste Batouri Bruno	17-12-2017
3	Deng-Deng	Sa Majeste Kassala Roger	18-12-2017

The planning was done with the chiefs and some village notables. Together with notables it was planned on the dates of the meetings.

- From the meeting with the chiefs it was found out that;
 - The communities that are around the dam have not benefitted anything from the project
 - The EDC (Project body) opens water to get into the Sanaga without warnings. That was not what was agreed upon when the project was still planned. The alarms that were set to warn community members in case water was added to the Sanaga are not working
 - In Deng-Deng, the population had risen to between 4000-18000 inhabitants since the start of the project. This had come with lots of disadvantages. Lots of diseases had been introduced in the village. HIV/AIDS rates had greatly increased.



Discussions with the village chiefs of Deng-Deng and Mbaki in the company of some community members

- In Deng-Deng of more than 50 families relocated, only 10 are there, the other families have sold the property and left the area.
- There is no fishing port as the project of the Dam was meant to create. This has caused a lot of tensions as some people feel that some areas especially where there is much fish belongs to them.
- The dam has created lots of problems to the inhabitants of Deng-Deng. They used to leave on hunting as main economic activity. The dam has taken lots of land. The reserve has also been created and the rest of lands are Forest Management Units (UFA). They no longer have land,

economic activities. They are not fishermen. The Dam project had as one of its responsibilities to train community members on new livelihood activities and that was not done. They are at the mercy of the new people who have come into their village.

- There is just one health centre and it is still under construction. Added to that there has been an increase in diseases with an influx of people. Insects that cause rashes have also established themselves. These are problems.
 - There is no the use of chemicals for fishing by the new farmers due to the fact that the fishing sector is not organised as planned.
 - There is no electricity in the area. However, solar panels have been constructed in one village only. This is a village that was created by the dam. This village is Wami. Most inhabitants in Wami left from other areas especially towards the Adamawa. They are more of them coming into the community and this is becoming a threat to the culture of the Kepere in Deng-Deng. None of the solar panels are found in Deng- Deng.
 - 3 new villages have been created in Deng-Deng; Ouami, Dewele, and Lom-Pangar. Haman is a settlement that had been abandoned in the past but it has been resettled.
 - There are lots of security threats with the new people coming into the village. Deng-Deng community members face people they don't know.
 - Compensations have not been made. When they are made they are not made fairly. For example, EDC made compensations for 30 m land around the high tension. Today government officials want to take land up 100 metres apart. Community members are angry about that.
- The venues for the meetings were also arrived at. In Mbeki and Goyoum it was agreed that the meetings will be held in the village chiefs' residence. In Deng-Deng it will be done in the community hall.

Challenges

- There is no good network in Mbaki. It is not accessible by phone. The community members cannot be contacted if any changes are made in the planning of the project activity
- The roads are also bad. Especially the road to Goyoum through Mbaki.

Conclusion

After the sensitization was done and workshop planned for more than 350 people, CAMGEW team together with the Director of CAMGEW decided that there will be only 2 workshops. One will be held in 1 Goyoum and the other in Deng-Deng. The workshops will be organised for a maximum of 40 persons per workshop. CAMGEW team informed community members in Mbaki and Goyoum about the changes through phone calls.